

RESPONSIBILITIES TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND AGENCIES

In addition to the standards above, there are local, national and international obligations with respect to protecting children. International school administrators must also be aware of host country and international requirements in developing and implementing their child protection frameworks and programs.

Relevant documents that require and guide the development and implementation of child protection policies and procedures include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) 1999.

These documents make clear the commitment of the member states to address significant issues of child abuse and neglect, and the inherent responsibility to protect children from its various forms. Below are relevant statements of which AISA schools should be aware:

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 16, Protection Against Child Abuse and Torture (UN CRC #19) states that:

States Parties to the present Charter shall take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while caring for the child (underlines added).

Further, the same Article states that:

Protective measures under this Article shall include effective procedures for the establishment of special monitoring units to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of child abuse and neglect.

Article 27 of the African Charter; Sexual Exploitation, states that:

States Parties to the Charter shall undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and shall in particular take measures to prevent:

- a) the inducement, coercion or encouragement of a child to engage in any sexual activity;
- b) the use of children in prostitution or other sexual practices;
- c) the use of children in pornographic activities, performances and materials.

The statements above emphasize the high priority placed on the protection of children from child abuse and neglect, its many forms, and the obligation to establish and strengthen structures and organizations responsible for providing comprehensive services to child abuse victims and their families.

AISA schools and all international schools must become aware of criminal laws and reporting procedures regarding child abuse and neglect in their host country. It is essential that international school administrators are knowledgeable in regard to the legal and moral obligations in host countries in which AISA schools reside and the specific laws that pertain to required and mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Although host countries may vary in the maturity of the community resources, social service systems and organizations in place to receive reports of child abuse and neglect, as well as in their ability to provide investigative, social, psychological, medical, and legal services to victimized children and their families, AISA schools should make themselves aware of the services that do exist in their immediate communities and make every effort to utilize them.